

**FIVE-MINUTE SPECIAL ORDER SPEECH  
BY THE HONORABLE FRANK R. WOLF OF VIRGINIA  
September 28, 2010**

**Mr Wolf: Madam Speaker, I rise today to share with my colleagues the text of a letter I intend to send today to President Obama, Secretary Gates, Admiral Mullen and all other parties in the administration charged with executing the war effort.**

**I will enclose in my correspondence to the administration a copy of a letter from a constituent who is the mother of six children, all of whom are currently serving or have served in the U.S. military. She offers her unique perspective on an idea I first proposed to the president on August 4—namely the creation of an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group.**

**I submit for the record a copy of my original letter to President Obama as well as a copy of the letter from my constituent.**

**My letter today to the administration will read in part:**

**“I implore you to consider my constituent’s views—the views of an ‘American mother with children glad to serve our country,’ and to move swiftly to establish an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group, modeled after the Iraq Study Group, to bring ‘fresh eyes’ to the war effort in Afghanistan.**

**“The group would be comprised of nationally known and respected individuals who love their country more than their political party and would serve to provide much-needed clarity to a policy that increasingly appears adrift.**

**“Candidly, after reading yesterday’s *Washington Post* piece adapted from Bob Woodward’s ‘Obama’s Wars,’ I have serious concerns that the needed clarity about our aim in Afghanistan ever existed within the administration.**

**Woodward writes, ‘Even at the end of the process, the president’s team wrestled with the most basic questions about the war, then entering its ninth year: What is the mission? What are we trying to do? What will work?’**

**“These are sobering questions—but they are questions that must be answered and the Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group is just the means to arrive at these answers in a way that honors our men and women in uniform.**

**“In the halls of Congress or the White House, at Foggy Bottom or the Pentagon, policy discussions can at times be detached from the actual lives that are most directly impacted by the decisions being made. This couldn’t be further from the case for this mother. She doesn’t have that luxury when it comes to the war in Afghanistan. And we mustn’t either.**

**“This is not a matter of politics—or at least it ought not be— for it is always in our national interest to openly assess the challenges before us and to chart a clear course to victory. Frankly, I’ve been deeply troubled by Woodward’s reporting which indicates that discussions of the war strategy were infused with political calculations. An Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group could help redeem what was clearly a deeply flawed process.”**

**I close with a line from my constituent: “It has sometimes appeared that the efforts in Afghanistan have trudged along, with success measured in part by the areas in which we have gained some measure of control versus the price paid in human lives both civilian and military. The casualties suffered aren't just numbers to me; each name, each face, represents a family who is paying the ultimate price, the loss of a son or daughter, brother or sister, father or mother; a family that will never be the same. Therefore, I wholeheartedly support the formation of an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group in the hope that it will help to turn the tide of this war and lessen the number of casualties as well.” (end quote)**

**I hope the president will heed the eloquent words of this military mother.**

